



EXPEDITED PROCEDURE - EXAMINING GROUP 2815

S/N 09/259,762

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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| Applicant: | Zhiping Yin et al. | Examiner: | Jose Diaz |
| Serial No.: | 09/259,762 | Group Art Unit: | 2815 |
| Filed: | March 1, 1999 | Docket: | 303.531US1 |
| Title: | OXYGEN PLASMA TREATMENT FOR NITRIDE SURFACE TO REDUCE PHOTO FOOTING | | |

AMENDMENT & RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

Box AF
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

In response to the Final Office Action mailed May 6, 2002, please amend the application as follows:

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TC 2804 MAIL ROOM

IN THE CLAIMS

Please substitute the claim set in the appendix entitled Clean Version of Pending Claims for the previously pending claim set. The substitute claim set is intended to reflect amendment of previously pending claim 1. The specific amendments to individual claims are detailed in the following marked up set of claims.

- (Amended) A method for reducing profile distortion in semiconductor fabrication without roughening a semiconductor substrate surface, comprising:
 - providing a semiconductor substrate comprising a film comprising silicon-nitride;
 - treating the film in a vacuum of about 3.0-6.5 Torr, for a time of about 10 seconds to about 5 minutes, and in an atmosphere comprising oxygen plasma as the gas present in the greatest concentration wherein the oxygen plasma flow rate is at least about 300 sccm oxygen and the atmosphere renders the substrate resistant to profile distortion and roughening to make a treated substrate;
 - applying a resist to the treated substrate; and
 - patterning the resist.

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